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DHS FOR SECRETARY CHERTOFF FROM CHARGE D'AFFAIRES EUGENE SWEENEY

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SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR DHS SECRETARY CHERTOFF'S VISIT TO T&T

¶1. (U) This message is sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

¶2. (U) Secretary Chertoff, my team and I look forward to welcoming you to Trinidad and Tobago. T&T is a major political and economic player in the region, and your visit will help underscore the importance we place on good relations with T&T and the wider Caribbean. The Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago holds the security portfolio within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Due to this fact, it is fitting that you meet with him and a representative grouping of the CARICOM Security Ministers here. This welcome cable will first provide a brief overview of the country, second look at potential topics that will be covered in your bilateral meeting and third, touch on some of the issues for your multilateral meeting.

T&T IN A (COCO)NUTSHELL

¶3. (U) The Caribbean twin island nation of Trinidad and Tobago is slightly smaller than Delaware. It is home to some 1.3 million people, primarily of African or East Indian descent. These groups each make up approximately 40 percent of the population, with people of Chinese, Lebanese and European descent and those of mixed ethnicity making up the balance. The government is based on the Westminster model, with a largely ceremonial President, an appointed Senate, and an elected House of Representatives. The judiciary is independent. The two major political parties are the Peoples National Movement (PNM) and the United National Congress (UNC), which have alternated power, illustrating the strength of T&T's democracy. The parties are heavily, but not exclusively, based on ethnicity, with the PNM supported largely by Afro-Trinidadians and the UNC by Indo-Trinidadians.

¶4. (SBU) In regional politics, it could be said that T&T is an opinion shaper. Manning just completed a six-month tenure as Chairman of CARICOM, a period marked by a renewed emphasis on regional economic integration. T&T receives high marks for its commitment to the needs of the smaller countries of the Eastern Caribbean. Beyond CARICOM, T&T maintains correct but cool relations with Venezuela, largely due to differences of opinion over Petrocaribe and Chavez's regional aspirations. T&T views Cuba as a Caribbean brother and maintains amicable ties. Manning regularly goes to Cuba for medical attention.

¶5. (SBU) The country has a vibrant industrialized economy. In recent years, the government has reversed direction from the divestment and privatization decisions of the 1990s by creating more than a dozen new state enterprises and, at one point, resuming full control of the national airline (from which it is now extricating itself). Trinidad and Tobago's relative abundance of economic resources makes it a leader in the region. T&T is

considered a low-risk investment destination. The T&T dollar remains stable in value against the U.S. dollar, contributing to the country's attractiveness to foreign investment. The Government regularly courts foreign investors, with U.S. companies usually taking the lead.

¶6. (U) One of the primary USG interests in T&T is energy security: the country provides approximately 75 percent of U.S. liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports. New fields are still being located and explored, including ones on the T&T/Venezuela maritime boundary. Even as new gas discoveries are made, the government is focused on developing the country's gas-based downstream industries, specifically methanol, urea, and ammonia, in order to diversify the energy industry and ensure its long-term growth. ALCOA is in the planning process to build a large capacity aluminum smelter in the south of the country (with bauxite provided from Guyana and Jamaica). T&T has permission from CARICOM to begin discussing a "partial-scope" free trade agreement with the United States that would provide duty-free entry for non-energy petroleum products, an indication of the country's long-term economic strategy.

¶7. (U) Many regional organizations are headquartered in Port of Spain, including the Association of Caribbean States, the Caribbean Epidemiological Center (CAREC) and the Caribbean Court of Justice. The CARICOM security apparatus (the Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, or IMPACS) is located here, keeping with the T&T Prime Minister's security portfolio in the CARICOM quasi-Cabinet. When the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) was under active discussion, Port of Spain lobbied to host the Secretariat; in fact, you can still see banners in the airport proclaiming "Port of Spain: The Natural home of the FTAA."

DRUGS, CRIME AND OTHER SECURITY THREATS

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¶8. (SBU) The country's location just seven miles off the coast of Venezuela makes drug trafficking a major challenge. Narcotics from South America transit Trinidad and Tobago's waters or move through the airports. Illegal drug use and trafficking are increasing and so are attendant societal ills. The narcotics trade is likely linked to the ever-increasing number of murders and other violent crimes that plague the country. The government faces an uphill battle in trying to control these problems, exacerbated by inadequate border controls, corruption in the police service and an inefficient judiciary. Trinidad and Tobago's vibrant petrochemical industry has the potential for precursor chemical diversion for use in illegal drug production. The country's growing economy, well developed banking sector, communications and transportation systems, facilitate a significant number of sizeable financial transactions that can obscure money laundering.

¶9. (SBU) Rising violent crime has been one area of particular concern over the last several years. T&T has seen significant increases in murders and kidnappings since 2000. In 2005 there were 384 murders, the highest number recorded in any one year. 2006 appears to be on track to exceed this number. With the notable exception of kidnapping for ransom, which has decreased dramatically this year, the GOTT has been unable to effectively address rising crime, partially due to corrupt and inefficient police, inadequate disciplinary systems, an inefficient judiciary and political intransigence. This, coupled with perceptions that some criminal organizations operate relatively freely, has led to a loss of confidence in the GOTT's ability to solve the crime problem. To date, this has not affected foreign direct investment or tourism, however several local business families have fled the country.

¶10. (SBU) Embassy Port of Spain is engaged in a comprehensive anti-crime and counter narcotics strategy that aims to assist the T&T law enforcement agencies with narcotics detection and interdiction, equip the judiciary with the skills necessary to

successfully prosecute crimes in an increasingly complex environment and train the financial sector in detecting and preventing money laundering and financial crimes and to provide youth with life skills and alternatives to crime. Recent programs include anti-kidnapping courses provided by the FBI, assistance with drug interdiction and arrests of a major kidnapping ring and training for pilots engaged in aerial surveillance. The TT Police have cited publicly such training programs and arrests as important components in the successful battle with kidnappers. Key players in implementing the Embassy's strategy include the State Department's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement program, a DHS Customs and Border Protection team, the Legal Attache, the Military Liaison Office (headed by a US Coast Guard Representative) and our DEA office.

BILATERAL ISSUES

¶11. (SBU) In your meeting with Prime Minister Patrick Manning and Minister of National Security Martin Joseph, we anticipate that they will raise the following issues:

- Early Hurricane Warning Systems
- Maritime Security
- Criminal Deportees
- LNG/Petroleum Infrastructure Security
- Increased USCG/TT Coast Guard Exercises
- Continued Support for the OAS/CICTE Initiative to Provide Security for Tourism and Recreational Facilities
- Article 98 Exemptions

¶12. (SBU) Many of these issues fall squarely into your area of expertise, and we defer to you and your capable team on those issues. CICTE is the counterterrorism committee of the Organization of American States, and the United States and Trinidad and Tobago have worked in close cooperation to ensure that CICTE is an effective organization. Minister Joseph is the immediate past chair of CICTE, and committed himself to passing and implementing security provisions for tourism and recreational facilities. We supported him then, and we continue to support this initiative.

¶13. (SBU) Maritime Security and Joint Interdiction Exercises: T&T is deeply interested in improving its maritime security capabilities. Largely, this would mean increasing patrol capability to interdict narcotics and other illicit materials while they remain off the coast. T&T is seven miles off the coast of Venezuela, with a long coastline that includes a number of

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secluded bays and coves. The Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard generally works well with other law enforcement entities to pursue traffickers, but no agency has enough resources to effectively interdict all illicit items. Further complicating the effort is the lack of a clear delineation of responsibilities; it is often unclear which agency is responsible for making an arrest when a boat enters the waters, then crosses into the river system and lands. We understand that Manning will likely raise the question of increasing joint patrols and cooperation with the USCG and other agencies in order to improve the efficiency of the T&T interdiction agencies. Manning is also likely to raise asking for USG assistance in expanding the range of the T&T Coast Guard to include several of the small island nations just to the north of T&T such as Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and St. Lucia.

¶14. (SBU) Criminal Deportees: This is an ongoing point of contention in the entire Caribbean. The Caribbean countries claim that recent increases in crime rates can be attributed in good part to criminal deportees who return to their country of nationality after long absences. They argue that these nationals are no longer well-integrated into the society, and might have stronger ties with the U.S. or Canada than their home island. Further, the Caribbean countries assert that once their nationals are placed in American prisons, they learn "more sophisticated

criminal techniques" that they export to their home turf, meaning that law enforcement cannot keep up with their technological advances. CARICOM countries have only anecdotal evidence to support these strongly felt and widely shared claims, but have commissioned studies to explore the issue. PM Manning is especially interested in receiving advance notice of any criminal deportee to T&T. Actually, ICE provides the T&T Embassy in Washington with three business days advance notice, per the memorandum of understanding on criminal deportees. We suspect that by the time the Embassy informs the GOTT, the deportee is already en route.

¶15. (SBU) LNG/Petroleum Infrastructure Security: T&T is well aware of its energy infrastructure vulnerabilities. In fact, the country's facilities are relatively well protected, with the loading docks in the LNG complexes more secure than the commercial shipping ports, but ships full of LNG or other petroleum products present an attractive target of opportunity. Manning will likely ask about possible assistance/advice in improving security in this area, as T&T provides approximately 75 percent of U.S. LNG imports.

¶16. (SBU) Article 98: This is a more difficult issue due to T&T former President Robinson's key role in instituting the International Criminal Court (ICC). T&T was one of the first ICC signatories, has not signed an Article 98 agreement with the U.S., and likely never will because of a perception that it would be seen as "undermining" the ICC. In spite of this, T&T would like increased assistance that could help them take on narcotics or weapons traffickers and fight crime. Manning is likely to broach the subject, looking for ways to work around Nethercutt restrictions (that is, how can they get similar assistance without signing an agreement).

MULTILATERAL PREPARATION

¶17. (SBU) Your multilateral meeting will be with the security ministers of the "CARICOM Bureau for Security," that is, T&T, Jamaica and Barbados (plus a representative from CARICOM, and likely one of the Eastern Caribbean States). These three countries together form the core group for sub-head of government level security issues. In addition to the hurricane early warning system and other regional issues mentioned above, the multilateral meeting is likely to include the following issues:

- Increased Security for the Eastern Caribbean
- Immigration Concerns with a Regional Witness Protection Program
- Port Security (with an emphasis on cruise ships and yachts)
- The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative
- Ongoing Cricket World Cup Security Assistance (that is, the APIS system and other training)

¶18. (SBU) On the witness protection program, CARICOM is interested in implementing a truly regional program, since each island population is small enough that it is nearly impossible to effectively create a completely new identity and life for witnesses. CARICOM might bring up the issue of including the U.S. Caribbean territories in the system, but is cognizant of the immigration concerns.

¶19. (SBU) CARICOM is likely to inquire if there is any assistance

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available to the countries to help implement and facilitate the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). Many felt that the initial Cricket World Cup package of a biometric smartcard would be a "pilot program" for integrating the Caribbean into the WHTI. CARICOM on its own cannot afford such a system, and had hoped for U.S. funding to help make it a reality. Even if this specific issue is not raised, CARICOM will likely inquire into the impacts of the WHTI on the tourism economies in the region.

¶20. (U) Again, my tea and I look forward to welcoming you to Port of Spain. This is a crucial visit, and we know that CARICOM

and PM Manning will be pleased that you have taken the time to travel to the far end of the Caribbean region to address mutual concerns.

SWEENEY